



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



History and Significance of Springfield Armory

For 174 years, Springfield Armory stimulated technological innovation, encouraged improved manufacturing processes and fostered increased use of laborsaving machines. This hallowed ground was known to Americans from George Washington to John F. Kennedy and to legions of men and women who, with their hands and inventive genius, worked here to shape America's destiny. Today, Springfield Armory National Historic Site preserves and interprets this colorful history in original buildings on their historic grounds through museum displays, public programs, notable collections, activities, and internet resources.



History

From the time the first muskets were hand-crafted until the high-precision machinery was powered down for the last time in 1968, Springfield Armory profoundly affected the lives of soldiers and civilians alike. Armory weapons influenced battlefield tactics and wartime strategy from the War of 1812 through the Vietnam Conflict. Some Springfield Armory small arms are still carried by our soldiers today in testament to their superior design and workmanship. Armory inventions and industrial processes, brought into the private sector in the 19th and 20th centuries, revolutionized the manufacture of consumer products and provided one of the catalysts for American industrialization. Springfield Armory's reputation attracted highly skilled workers and was a major reason for the rapid growth of the City of Springfield and the surrounding area. So many advanced technology industries were founded in the region around the Armory, that the area was dubbed "The Precision Corridor."

Springfield Armory National Historic Site

Today, the National Park Service (NPS) manages a 20-acre portion of the 55-acre National Historic Site. The remaining 35-acre portion is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and functions as Springfield Technical Community College (STCC). The NPS and STCC work together as legislated partners to manage the site as a whole. The partnership between a Federal NPS unit and a state college makes for a very dynamic and bustling urban park and is one of the great strengths of the site. The site is home to the Benton Small Arms Collection, one of the world's largest historic firearm collections. This collection, along with historic structures and landscapes, form the core of the cultural and natural resources preserved and interpreted for public benefit.



(Above left) The important contribution of the Armory's women and African Americans, among others, was fostered and readily recognized by a grateful Nation; (right) Mr. Wilbur Ancrum, Foreman of Metal Finish Shop, and others receiving the ARMY-NAVY "E" for excellence, award, October 14, 1942.



Social Media: [facebook.com/SPARNHS](https://www.facebook.com/SPARNHS) twitter.com/SPARNHS

The Rewards of Special Events and Partnerships

This park is on the move! The year 2013 witnessed increases in program attendance for all categories of Personal Services. Military Bands and the return of Blank Firing Demonstrations of Armory weapons wowed audiences with an increase of 38% for Performing Arts and Demonstrations. The interpretive team focused their energy and enthusiasm to produce attractive mission based programs. Formal Interpretive program attendance climbed 138% and Curriculum Based Education attendance rose 45% from 2012. Special Events such as the Big Band concert and Armory Day reached an increase of 56% and validated the use of television, radio, print advertisements and event banners.

From 2011 to 2013, attendance at offsite exhibits rose sharply by 285%. In 2013 partnerships flourished and included: the US military, Springfield Museums, and a local music school. Springfield Armory NHS participated in 25 exhibits in nearby communities. For 17 days at the Eastern States Exposition, the largest state fair in the northeast, 14 NPS sites communicated Springfield Armory NHS's mission to over 17,000 people.

Rangers mingled with thousands at the annual pancake breakfast and directed people to Springfield Armory NHS. Whether at the popular Mattoon Street Arts Festival or the EASTEC Manufacturing Trade Show people marveled at Armory technology and the talented workers who formed the first national armory of the United States.



Above: Naturalization ceremonies on the grounds continue the Armory's historic tradition of welcoming new citizens.



Left to right: (1) Black powder captivates visitors at blank firing demonstrations of Civil War muskets; (2) Reenactors from the Peter Brace Brigade representing the MA 54th at Armory Day celebration; (3) Annual Big Band concert commemorating the 1943 Benny Goodman concert.



Building a Vision for Education

Springfield Armory National Historic Site (NHS) has accomplished great strides over the last year and set into motion an engaging and effective education program. Through continued participation in the Teaching American History grant program extension, the Springfield Armory NHS hosted several professional development workshops in conjunction with Westfield State University and Collaborative for Educational Services that helped to raise awareness of the Armory's significance and primary source materials available for curriculum development and place-based learning experiences.



Young visitors to the site display badges and certificates earned through completion of the Jr. Ranger program.

The park welcomed its first Teacher-Ranger-Teacher to the site this past summer who produced unit plans for upper elementary and middle school students, including lessons on Shay's Rebellion. Through its newly developed Education Advisory Committee, Springfield Armory NHS is working to reinvigorate partnerships with relevant faculty and staff at local area schools, colleges, and universities as well as foster new connections in order to increase academic collaborations and collectively address the needs of the student population in Springfield and surrounding areas. In collaboration with the committee and the park's recent induction into the National Park Service's Park for Every Classroom

program, Springfield Armory NHS will soon complete the development of its education plan that will direct the site's educational activities going forward. These activities collectively provide opportunities for educators to work with resource specialists, use the park as a "learning laboratory", and participate in professional development opportunities that contribute to educational sustainability.



Local area students are: (1) sworn in as Jr. Rangers; (2) participate in an Evolution of Firearms program; and (3) enjoy a Ranger-led talk of the historic grounds.



Springfield Armory Alliance



These formal gardens existed behind the Commanding Officer's Quarters.



Melvin Edwards

In 2013 the work of polishing the "gem," officially known as Springfield Armory National Historic Site, began in earnest. On November 16th the park held an open house to start the newly established friends group – Springfield Armory Alliance. The Alliance is a collection of dedicated volunteers, working in conjunction with the wonderfully talented staff of the Armory under the advisement of Superintendent James Woolsey.

Francis Gagnon, local historian; David Glassberg, Professor, UMass Department of History; Roy Jinks, Historian, Smith & Wesson; Wayne Phaneuf, Executive Editor, The Republican; Mike Suzor, Vice President, Springfield Technical Community College; and I, Melvin Edwards, Springfield City Councilor, have come together to share our passion for local history, love of Springfield, and our appreciation of the contributions of those who worked at the Armory. The members of

the Springfield Armory Alliance understand that like a diamond that must be cut, shaped, and polished, the Armory needs some tender loving care. We share fond memories of the beautiful Victory Gardens on the grounds of the arsenal, family members who once worked here, and this sprawling facility's enormous contribution to the economic viability of the City of Homes.

I have heard it said that "many hands make light work." Well, it's time for the work to be done. The members of the Springfield Armory Alliance have come together to share our talents, passion for history, and love of country. We respectfully ask that you come and share with us.

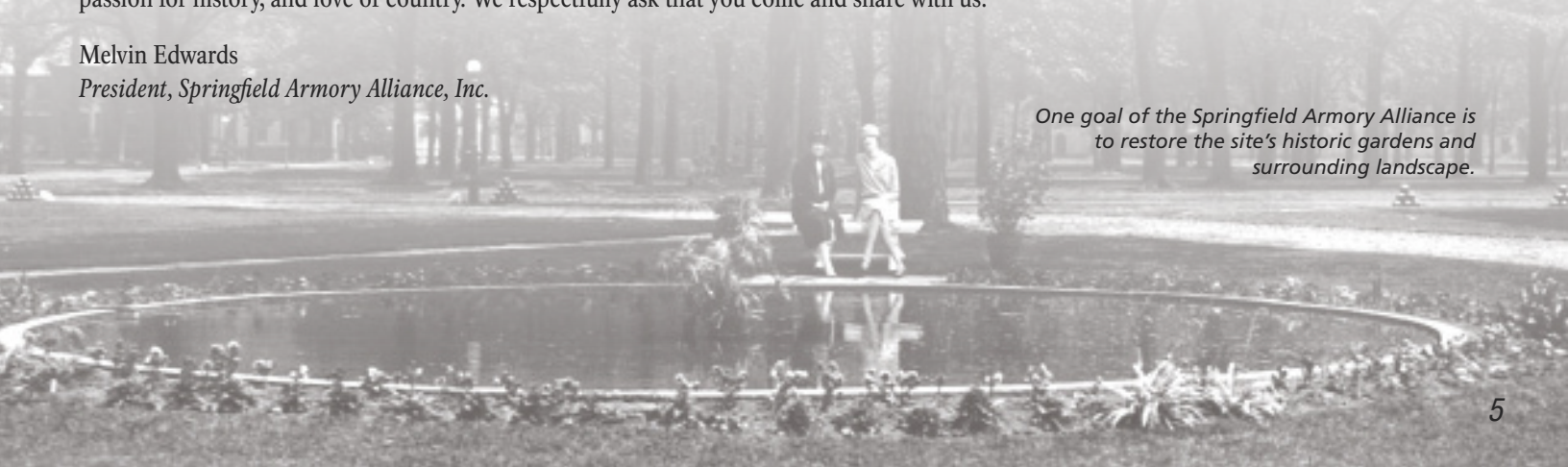
Melvin Edwards
President, Springfield Armory Alliance, Inc.

MISSION

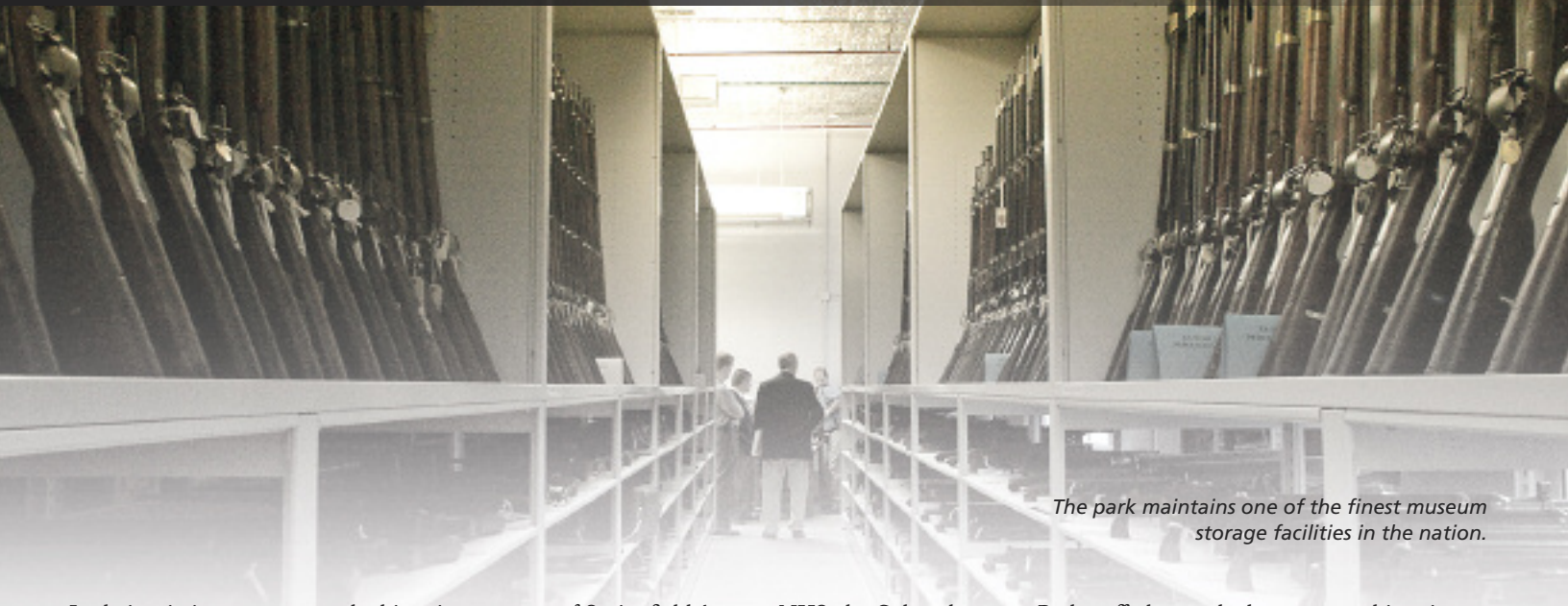
The mission of the Springfield Armory Alliance, Inc., a non-profit agency "friends group," is to support Springfield Armory NHS in numerous exciting activities. Key efforts of the Alliance will be to support historic preservation, advocacy, education, and promotion.

Please consider supporting the Springfield Armory Alliance and become a member. Five membership levels range from \$15 to \$250 for individuals and families. For further information please call 413-271-3982 or email armoryalliance@gmail.com. Thank you.

One goal of the Springfield Armory Alliance is to restore the site's historic gardens and surrounding landscape.



Preserving Cultural Resources



The park maintains one of the finest museum storage facilities in the nation.

In their mission to preserve the historic resources of Springfield Armory NHS, the Cultural Resources staff worked on several important projects over the last year. Regional NPS conservators stabilized almost 100 historic firearms. Archivists worked through the year to organize, rehouse, and catalog over 200 linear feet of archival material from the historic Springfield Armory. Park staff worked closely with representatives from the US Army to inventory the nearly 6,600 items in the Benton Small Arms Collection. Also, the park accepted a number of significant donations, including a Springfield Armory sword, historic photographs and personal papers of former workers, and many other historic artifacts. Springfield Armory NHS would like to thank the following people and organizations for their generous donations:



The restored Byers Street Gate.

Mr. Rocco Calabrese
Mr. Bruce Gaudette
Mrs. Margaret Melaragni
Mr. Rockwell Keeney
Northampton Police Department
Greenfield Police Department



Park staff also worked to preserve historic structures around the site. The perimeter fence received quite a bit of work. Graffiti was carefully removed from the State Street gate entrance. A pillar, offset by a vehicle, was moved back to its proper location. Original bronze ordnance symbols were reproduced in fiberglass and installed at the Byers Street Gate. In partnership with the School of

Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, a group of graduate students performed a study analyzing businesses and markets that could help rehabilitate and use the Commanding Officer's Quarters. The National Park Service also authored a Historic Structure Report outlining the history, importance, and character-defining features of Building 5 & 6. The report has been a valuable tool as the park works with partners to find ways to save the building.



Park maintenance mechanic removes graffiti from the historic fence.



The park received many additions to the collection this year, including rifles, pistols, and swords.



Archival collections processed this year are now accessible to researchers.

Restoring the Historic Grounds

The National Park Service is working with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation to restore the grounds to their original historic splendor circa 1950. Using Springfield Armory landscaping plans from 1946, 1958 and 1962 as guidance, the park is cleaning out underbrush, pruning trees and replanting historic shrubs and trees.



Using modern equipment and techniques to economically maintain the grounds.

As a first step, staff completed an inventory and condition assessment of all trees on our property. This has been compared with old US Army landscape plans to identify what should be on site and what is volunteer growth. For example, the site is now cluttered with exotic and invasive species that have self-propagated over the past 60 years. The project has identified and marked these trees for removal. None of the big and old historic trees, sometime known as “Witness Trees,” will be removed.

Many of the older trees need pruning and other special care. There are also some historically important tree species that are now missing. These will be identified and then replanted over the next two years.

We invite you to come visit this work in progress and watch as the landscaping is rehabilitated.



Rehabilitated shrubs near Commanding Officer's Quarters.



Staff collecting data for comprehensive tree assessment.

Happenings in 2014

Special Exhibits Gallery

The Springfield Armory NHS has recently conducted a floor move in order to create a temporary exhibit gallery on the industry side of the museum floor. This will enable the park to rotate objects out of the permanent collection and create theme-based exhibits. The gallery space will open to the public on March 23, 2014 with its inaugural exhibition, *Steampunk Springfield Armory: Re-Imagining the Nation's Weaponry*, as part of the larger Steampunk extravaganza taking place at multiple venues throughout the city of Springfield. The exhibition will feature re-imagined weapons, drawings, and floor sculptures paired with authentic weapons from the Armory's historic weapons collection. Organized by Steampunk visionary, Bruce Rosenbaum of ModVic and the Springfield Armory NHS staff.



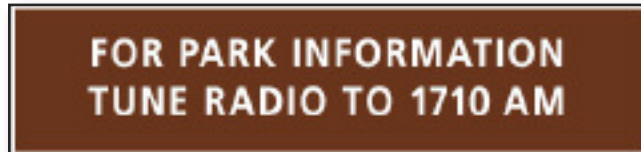
Courtesy of John Ward, Steampunk Artist.

Springfield Armory National Historic Site
One Armory Square, Suite 2
Springfield, MA 01105-1299
Ph: (413) 271-3976 • Fax: (413) 747-8062



Lack of adequate signage is a daily complaint at the site. Springfield Armory worked with NPS sign designers to design freeway signs.

They will be fabricated and installed in 2014.



The park, in coordination with STCC, will install a Traveler Information System radio station. Starting in early 2014 visits can tune to 1710AM to plan their Springfield Armory visit.



The Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) is leading the effort for signage around the historic site. Thanks to Ira Rubenzahl, Mike Suzor and the rest of the staff at STCC for developing and funding these attractive signs.



In 2013 the NPS Social Science Research Unit collected data for an in depth survey of Springfield Armory visitors. The report will detail demographic information including how much money is spent in the local economy. Final results are expected in the coming months.



This sign will be installed outside of the visitor center.